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Berks County Chapters
Daughters of the American
Revolution
Reading, Pennsylvania

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Berks County (Pa) Chapter
D. A. R.

Washington's Birthday
1908

Annual Prize Giving of
Gold Medals
to the Winners, of the
Girls High School
Reading, Pa.

For the best Essay on Patriotic Subject

Mrs James Owen Keiser
Chapter Regent.

F29R26

Gift
Dr B. R. Heim
21 Mr '08

Washington's Birthday

Celebration.

under the auspices

of the

Berks County (Pa) Chapter

D. A. R.

1908

Competitive Prize Essay

to the

Writers of the best Essays on Patriotic

Subjects.

By pupils of the Berks County School.

Reading Penna

Expenses Feby 21 1908.

Mrs Jane S Owen Keim

Chapter Regent.

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Who was, Beaumarchais?

Address by Regent Keim.

Mrs. deB. Randolph Keim's address in presenting the medals, follows:

As details make up the mass of the world's history, it is in this field of research and exploitation your efforts are intended to be directed. This brings me to that atom of the immensity of the world's people and affairs characterized by name as the county of Berks in the Commonwealth of Penn'a, the federal republic of the United States of America, the primate of nations of the earth and of everything up to the utmost limits of finite things.

A Musical Community.

The city of Reading, the metropolis of the unit of population and industry mentioned is justly recognized among other characteristics as a musical community. It has its Ringgold and other excellent bands; its Germania and other tuneful orchestras, its inspiring church choirs, and not least its splendid German singing societies.

I have no doubt many are saying to themselves what has this to do with fighting for American Independence. At first flush apparently nothing. To develop a conundrum like this is the real object of the prizes which the Berks County Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution has set apart for the young ladies presenting the best essays.

The purpose is not general history. We have plenty of that, one after the other, year after year, paraded before the American reader in the same net. This is no discredit, as the story never grows old, but when there is so much unexplored territory, why tell ourselves and those that come after us, what is already known even in the dark.

I shall give you an example. In every American child the first lisping of patriotism in its soul, pronounces the names Lexington and Bunker Hill. To their childhood thoughts that embraces all there is to the war of Independence.

Among we older ones the fighting is brought down to the surrender of Cornwallis, at Yorktown, to Gen. Washington and his Continentals and Comte de Rochambeau and the Grenadiers of our "Great and good friend," Louis XVI., King of France, and Navarre.

This we also know, therefore why exert ourselves in simply amplifying that which we already know.

How many in this large audience have listened to the beautiful arias and recitations of "Il Barbiera di Sevilla," or "Il Nozze di Fiagro?" Those who have will tell you about Rosini and Mozart. So far very good, but how would the entrancing scores of these masters of melody have been possible without Le Barbeer de Seville and Le Mariage de Figan, or as we know them in our own tongue on the Lyric stage as The Barber of Seville and the Marriage of Figaro, and even then probably not one in 100, per chance 1,000, without inquiry has ever heard in this day and generation of the son of Caro, the watchmaker of Paris. If it were possible to ask the question of good Ben Franklin, then in Paris; Arthur Lee, then secret agent of the States in the same city, or the Continental Congress, if you were to ask the muskets in the hands of the defenders of Bunker Hill they would answer "God bless our arms and Piere Augustine Carou de Beaumarchais."

And now to a little history. In the year 1732, in La Belle Ville de Paris (the beautiful city of Paris) was born a boy, Caro, who as he outgrew his humble home, discarding association with the paternal vocation in which he was trained, assumed the supplementary cognomen de Beaumarchais.

The transition from youth to manhood, displaying remarkable felicity of pen in dramatic and lyric literature, elegance of manner and proficiency in music, he early became teacher to the daughters of Louis XV. which developed into confidential employment by that monarch and his successor, Louis XVI. of sacred memory, to the cause of America. Just previous to the latter engagement de Beaumarchais produced his celebrated sensational five-act comedy, "The Barber of Seville." Although the scene was laid in Spain, the sentiment was near the heart of France. That comedy and its sequel, "The marriage of Figaro," nine years later, made for Beaumarchais the unquestioned reputation of being the most distinguished French dramatist of the eighteenth century, and the two dramas par excellence, the credit of being the most tremendously successful in that branch of literature and histrionic art.

Heart and Soul With Struggling Americans.

It is not necessary to search for the secret of his ("pull," to use the roughness of our present speech)

friendship, suffice it to say he was, heart and soul, enlisted in the success of the struggling Americans and persuaded the King to permit him to draw arms and ammunition from the royal arsenals and send them to America. As a shield and to give an appearance of orderly transaction this was operated under the mercantile firm of Rodrigul Hostaleret Compaquil Cap St. Francis Santo Domingo, all of which was none other than Pierre Augustine Cason, alias de Beaumarchais, Paris.

As early as 1775, the year of Lexington and Bunker Hill, and more than 12 months before the Declaration of Independence, de Beaumarchais memorialized his King in advocacy of the Americans. He negotiated with Arthur Lee, agent of the Continental Congress, and persuaded Maurepas and Vergennes, the King's Ministers, to sanction a loan of 4,000,000 lires Tournais to secure the advance of an equal sum from Spain. These substantial aids to the cause of the States when they were without an actively foreign friend in the whole world were continued not only out of his private means, but the King's, down to the signing of the treaty of recognition and alliance of February, 1778, between King of the French and the Thirteen American States.

Among this French playwright's contributions of warlike supplies to the States, I may mention a single transaction in 1777, the year of absolute impoverishment and almost abandonment of hope, notwithstanding several victories overbalanced by the defeats when he shipped to America, eluding the fleets of the enemy scouring the ocean everywhere in three of his own vessels, 200 cannon, 25,000 muskets and 200,000 pounds of gunpowder. Without this timely succor from the watchmaker's son, the war of American Independence must have collapsed, for Washington himself told LaFayette when he returned to the colors with the good tidings of the alliance he had been instrumental in securing, that his soldiers had fed on every kind of horse food, save hay.

And more of good friend Beaumarchais, who, on his ship, the Amphritrite, he sent across 50 European officers, among them men whose

names to this day are household words, LaRouerie, Pulaski, Von Steuben and others, would like to name them all.

Cost Us Nothing.

I must explain the Marquis de LaFayette, whom Washington loved as a son, and every fine American adores as a friend, came to us purely in his personal character, never costing the Government a cent for his services nor his expenses. And more, if possible, to the glory of Beaumarchais, he continued his friendly aid for a whole year after his King had come openly to our assistance, and involved himself in a war with his royal confrere, our old enemy, George III., of England.

There is a pathetic sequel to what I have given you in merest outline. The Continental Congress, out of funds and operating on worthless fiat money supposing their playwright, poet and musical friend was "playing to the galleries," failed to make remittances for the chief reason they had no remittances to remit. Naturally one who had taken 4,000,000 livres tournois, equal to about $800,000 of our money, out of his own pocket, came to the end of his financial tether. And here our "Great and good ally," as Washington called the King of the French, in turn came to the rescue of our other good friend, by advancing another million francs ($200,000) to relieve de Beaumarchais of his embarrassments, and still he persisted in shipments until 1779.

Beaumarchais died 16 years after our independence was won, without receiving a dollar of reimbursement. Thirty-six years after death and 42 years after the treaty of peace, his heirs, coming across old chests containing his papers, musty and decayed, found these unsettled accounts. They presented them to the American Congress and secured a settlement for 800,000 francs, about one-fifth of the original sum—about $160,000 in our money.

A Suggestion for Essays.

In this phase of our Revolution, American historians are either remiss, ignorant or indolent. The moral of what I have told, to make clear, is that we do not want paraphrasing the general events of the American Revolution, but something new. I would suggest for a year or two at least, restricting your essays to men, women and events of the Revolution associated with the county of Berks, and secondarily, or not at all for the present, the Commonwealth of Penn'a, leaving the broader field of the conflict at large to the historian in general.

There must be material of this specific character somewhere. On this interesting anniversary in 1909 let us see who will be the first to bring some of it to light.

I would like to complete the story by adding that Goethe took the suggestion of his drama, "Clavigo," from the memories of Beaumarchais, giving an account of his experiences in Spain, whither he went to protect his sister against her betrothed of that name.

The two comedies I have mentioned afforded models to Hugo and Dumas, besides inspiring the operas of Rossini and Mozart.

The character of Figaro created in the first year of the American Revolution is that of a shrewd, light-hearted scapegrace, and is conceded by critics to be one of the best drawn figures of dramatic literature and a complete incarnation of the democratic tendencies of the time. This marriage of Figaro, which immediately preceded the French Revolution, was so democratic in tendencies that its performance was prohibited by the Royal Censors. It is not thought it was Beaumarchais' purpose to play upon the passions of the people, but the fires of liberty burned deep within him. The comedies were written for a sensation and as the saying goes, "they were for a fact." One of his admirers said of him and them, "His purpose was simply to fire a squib and he exploded the magazine," meaning the French Revolution, which I may say he escaped with his head by fleeing into Holland.

READI

PA., FRIDAY, FEI

WINNERS OF D. A. R. GOLD MEDALS

PATRIOTIC EXERCISES AT GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL.

REGENT KEIM SUGGESTS THAT LOCAL SUBJECTS BE TREATED FOR SEVERAL YEARS—EXCELLENT MUSIC — PRETTY DECORATIONS—AUDIENCE SHOWS APPRECIATION.

Reading Feb 21 1908

The spirit of patriotism prevailed throughout the annual exercises conducted at the Girls' High School, at 2 o'clock this afternoon, in observance of the birth of George Washington, and to the Berks Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution belongs much of the credit for the success of the affair, owing to the interest they incited among the pupils by the awarding of prizes for the best essays on historical subjects by members of the calsses of 1907 and 1908.

Nine members of the former class submitted essays, while six, chosen from among the number, written by the members of this year's class, were submitted. Miss Beatrice Hess came out the victor in the former contest, being awarded the gold medal, while Miss Louise Himmelreich received honorable mention. The honors of the class of this year were carried off by Miss Annie Detweiler and Miss Grace Oswald, received honorable mention from the judges.

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For several days the different committees of the school labored unceasingly in the interests of the event and their efforts were well rewarded.

The corridors and assembly room were elaborately decorated for the occasion, and evidences of patriotism were conspicuous throughout the building.

The banisters and chandeliers were entwined in red, white and blue bunting, and American flags were suspended at different points.

At the opening of the exercises the pupils presented Miss Mayer, their Principal, with a large bouquet of American Beauty roses.

Occupied the Stage.

The stage at the east end of the assembly room was attired in National colors, and a large portrait of Washington draped in red, white and blue, hung from the principal's desk. Occupying seats on the platform were the committee of the Daughters of the Revolution in charge of the awarding of the medals, consisting of Mrs. Robert Birch, Mrs. Annie J. H. Printz and Mrs. C. M. Steinmetz; the judges were: J. Bennett Nolan, Fred. Schmucker and Rev. Dr. J. A. Maxwell; the faculty, in charge of Miss Mary H. Mayer, principal.

Classes A, B, C, were seated in the assembly room, and Class D occupied seats on the balcony. The brightness of the room together with the decorations, presented an inspiring sight and expressions of commendation were heard from the many spectators.

The exercises opened with devotional services by Rev. Dr. James A. Maxwell, pastor of the First Baptist Church.

Excellent Music.

Then came the rendition of the hymn "Ave Maria" by the Girls' High School Chorus, under the direction of Miss Elizabeth McGowan. The harmony of the different voices was pleasing, and the expressions of praise were deserved.

Miss Elsie M. Hansen and Miss Bertha Hansen played a piona duet the "Hungarian Rhapsody," by Liszt. The rendition demonstrated much talent on the part of the performers, and also careful attention to the study of music.

The waltz song, the "Birds of the Choir," was pleasingly rendered by the Girls' High School Chorus, and proved one of the mose delightful numbers on the programme.

Praise From Mr. Nolan.

Then followed an address by Attorney J. Bennett Nolan. He referred to the work of the D. A. R and commended the members on the results accomplished. He also spoke of Washington, in whose honor the event was being held, and eulogized the accomplishments and attainments of the father of our country.

A feature was the singing of "Praise the Lord," by Miss Florence Balloch, in which the pupils joined in the chorus. Miss Balloch possesses a beautiful soprano voice which was heard to advantage.

Then followed the report of the judges, J. Bennett Nolan, Fred Schmucker and Rev. Dr. James A. Maxwell, which was the announcement of the winners in the essay contest.

Miss Miriam Baker then rendered piano solos, entitled "Scherzino" and "Nocturine," from a "Midsummer Night's Dream." Miss Baker's performance was very artistic

Here follows Address of
Mrs Keim
Regent of Berks County Chapter
[For address see folio 1 of this].

Winners Read Essays.

Then followed the reading of the prize essays by Misses Hess and Himmelreich, '07 class, and Misses Detweiler and Oswald, of '08. Their work showed a great deal of study and the applause was deserved.

The exercises concluded with the singing of "America" by the audience and pupils. The event proved the most successful in the history of the school, and the Principal, Miss Mary H. Mayer, and the faculty were congratulated.

It was the first time in the history of the annual event held at the school that two prizes were awarded. The medals are of gold and very pretty and are valued at $5.

Subjects and Contestants.

The pupils of the normal class had the privilege of writing essays on either of the subjects, "Reading's part in the Revolution" and "Benjamin Franklin in the Revolution." Besides the winners the following submitted essays: Misses Viola Kuser, Leah Schlechter, Beatrice Hess, Florence Krug, Mary Yundt, Carrie Young, Stella Miller, Elsie Keever and Louise Himmelrich.

The subjects for the class of this year were "Ethan Allen at Fort Ticonderoga" and "The care of the sick during the American Revolution." The contestants besides the winners were Misses Anna Detweiler, Gertrude Frankhauser, Rose Kessler, Edna Potteiger and Miriam Babcock.

Had Charge of the Details.

The following committees appointed by Miss Mayer, the Principal of the school, had charge of the details:

Decorating Committee—Miss Katherine Ammon, Chairman; Misses Phillips, Sheidy, Gartman, Lindemuth, Rose Kessler, Lou Sharman, Margaret Mauger, Stella Krick, Gertrude Frankhouser, Miriam Fry, Ethel Derrick, Adelaide Norton, Eva Bressler, Lulu Care, Lenora Davies, Jennie Ermold, Helene Cruise, Sara Krick, Elizabeth Wray, Edna Hintz, Marguerite Breyfogel, Georgine Kurtz, Helen Hoover, Emily Koch, Annie Regar, Susie Mellinger, Florence Allgaier, M. Gormley, Helen Stauffer.

Arrangements—Miss E. Bressler, Chairman; Misses Knaut, MacAnally, Sampsel, Steffy, Beiter, Boltz, Fehr, Kochel, F. Lotz, A. Miller, Raezer, Helen Driscoll, E. Kretz, Drayer, Fricker, K. Kissinger, Rapp, Reeser, H. Smith, Schlegel, Hunter, Keim, E. Stortz, Printz, Merbitz, Hawman, Custer, Bard, M. Baker.

Ushers for First Floor—Miss May Paull, Chairman; Misses McHose, Rebecca Krick, Helen Kilmer, Anna Ruth.

Ushers Second Floor—Miss Alma Boycote, Chairman; Misses Ertie Kissinger, Florence Hawk, Fichthorn, Nelson, Frederick, Sara Lotz, Unger, Crossley, Printz, Dora Smith, Schick, Rentschler.

Ushers Third Floor—Miss Carrie Young, Chairman; Misses McKenna, Knabb, Esther Miller, Mary Murray and E. McCann.

Another account
The Herald Reading Pa

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MISS HESS WINS PRIZE

AS DOES MISS DETWEILER

THEY ARE THE LUCKY WINNERS OF ANNUAL D. A. R. ESSAY CONTEST AMONG PUPILS OF THE SENIOR AND JUNIOR CLASSES OF THE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL.

Again the Berks County Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution furthered the cause of patriotism today. The custom of annually observing Washington's birthday by awarding prizes for the best essays on historic subjects at the Girls' High School was continued by the holding of very interesting exercises at 2 o'clock this afternoon.

For several days the committees appointed by the principal for the purpose, and published in a recent issue of The Herald, have been beautifying the High School for the occasion.

The Daughters' celebration is always an occasion of much festivity for the school girls and they do their level best to add to the brightness of the school the splendor of the stars and stripes.

The decorations for today began in the hall of the first floor, where banleters and chandellers were draped with tri-colored bunting. The hall of the second floor and the main room were all resplendent with flags, gracefully festooned.

MANY DAUGHTERS PRESENT.

The Daughters, representing the chapter and the friends and relatives of the pupils were welcomed by the ushers and given seats. The officers of the D. A. R. were seated on the platform with the judges, J. Bennett Nolan, Rev. Dr. J. A. Maxwell and Frederick Schmucker.

The committee on medals, the selection of subjects and judges was also seated on the platform. The members of this standing committee are Mrs. Robert Birch, Miss A. J. Printz, and Mrs. C. M. Steinmetz.

It has been the custom of the chapter to present two medals to each normal class, that is the class graduating the previous June. But by a new arrangement the contestants hereafter will be members of the graduating class only. The new regulation would have necessitated the omission of the class of 1907. Consequently a special arrangement had to be made for this year. Thus it came about that one gold medal went to the class of 1907 and the other to 1908 today.

The 1907 contestants wrote on one of two subjects: "Reading's Part in the American Revolution" and "Benjamin Franklin in the American Revolution."

The 1907 contestants were: Viola Kuser, Leah Schlechter, Beatrice Hess, Florence Krug, Mary Yundt, Carrie Young, Stella Miller, Elsie Keever.

ESSAYS ON ETHAN ALLEN.

The 1908 class members, numbering 85, all wrote essays on one of the two subjects "Ethan Allen at Fort Ticonderoga" or "The Care of the Sick During the American Revolution." The faculty read all the essays and selected the six best ones for the perusal of the judges. The six were: Gertrude Frankhouser, Miriam Babcock, Edna Potteiger, Rose Kessler, Grace Oswald, Anna Detweiler.

The exercises opened with prayer by Rev. Dr. James A. Maxwell, of the First Baptist Church, who was presented by the principal, Miss Mary Hunter Mayer.

"Ave Maria" by Mendelssohn, was then delightfully rendered by the high school chorus, under the supervision of Miss Elizabeth McGowan.

A piano duet, "Hungarian Rhapsodie" No. 12, Liszt, by Miss Elsie M. Hansen and Miss Bertha E. Hansen was then given and won much applause.

"Birds of Spring" by Brinkworth, was then sung by the Girls' High School choir and gave great pleasure to all who heard it.

MR. NOLAN GETS PATRIOTIC.

The address, which came next on the program, was made by J. Bennett Nolan, who also later made the report of the examining committee. He spoke briefly and to the point. In the course of his remarks he commended the patriotism of the Daughters through whom the memories of our ancestors are properly venerated. He spoke of the interest of the judges in the essays submitted to them and said their only regret had been that there were not enough prizes for all. A few historic references completed his very terse and pleasing address.

There followed Mendelssohn's solo and chorus "Praise Thou the Lord" by Miss Florence Balloch and the school, delightfully rendered.

The report of the examining committee showed the prize winners to be No. 8 for the prize and No. 4 for honorable mention in 1907; one for the medal and two for honorable mention in 1908.

The announcement of the lucky numbers was greeted with applause.

Miss Miriam Baker then played "Scherzino" and Mendelssohn's "Nocturne" most effectively.

THE PRIZE WINNERS,

Mrs. deB. R. Kelm, regent of the Berks County Chapter, D. A. R., opened the envelopes bearing the fortunate numbers and presented the pretty gold and enamel medals to the winners, Miss Beatrice Hess, of 1907, and Miss Anna Detweiler, of 1908.

Honorable mention was given Miss Louise Himmelreich, of 1907, and Miss Grace Oswald, of 1908.

Then Mrs. Kelm related, as is her custom, the latest data showing the work and growth of the National Society, which now has 62,000 members and has had a growth of 15,000 in the last year.

She told how the Berks County Chapter, with five other chapters of con-

(Continued on Second Page.)

(Continued from First Page.)

tiguous locality, is educating a Kentucky girl, having taken her from her obscure home in the mountains and placed her in an excellent boarding school.

Mrs. Kelm's interest in and work on behalf of the society, combined with natural oratorical ability, made her address one of unusual interest. She went on to speak of the society's work in preserving historic sites and educating foreigners in the mode of government of the United States. She spoke of Memorial Continental Hall work and gave these additional facts:

ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND.

"The D. A. R. is the only society in the history of the world organized by women for patriotic purposes alone; the only society erecting a fireproof building as a memorial to the forefathers and foremothers of this powerful and good nation without any outside aid.

"This National Society is chartered under the laws of the United States government. It reports to the Smithsonian Institution. The government prints its reports annually, in which is recorded the patriotic commemorative, historic and educational work of our society. The government in Washington is now erecting a statue to the memory of the heroic foreigners who came to our shores and sacrificed their time and money for the patriotic cause. Statues to Rochambeau and Lafayette are already erected. Those to Von Steuben and Pulaski are being constructed and now for a bit of history not found in the school books:

"Who was Beaumauhais?"

The reading of the prize essays by the lucky girls was greeted with applause. Then the audience sang "America" and the program was ended.

The bouquet of beautiful red roses on the desk was the gift of Class A to Miss Mayer.

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